

THE AMERICAN INDIAN HOBBYIST

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COSTUME OF THE IROQUOIS WOMAN

by BOB GABOR



MODERN

TRADITIONAL

MODERN

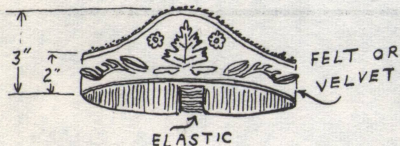
Fellows we may as well face it....the ladies (bless 'em) are also very much interested in many facets of Indian Lore, and well they might be. About 99% of the splendid quill and beadwork we admire so much was done by the women of the various tribes. It is the artistic tastes and abilities of the Indian women that we awe when we attempt most of our craftwork and decoration....ever think of it that way?

Presented here are the traditional Iroquois woman's costume, plus some of the modern varieties seen on our Iroquois reservations in New York and Canada. The women have been far more conservative than the men in preserving the traditional Iroquois costuming style and thus it is that the traditional version is seen as often, if not more so, than the modern varieties.

HEAD BAND



LOOM-BEADED BAND



Often times this is a simple loom beaded band, sewn onto buckskin or light canvas to stiffen it. The use of elastic in the back is optional, and only about 1 inch of it is used anyway.

The crown type of headband has been in use since earliest days among Woodlands women....about a century ago it was decorated in the heavy, ornate type of beading called "embossed" beading, often utilizing pony beads and other sizes of beads.

Felt or velvet is the usual material (again, sewed to buckskin or light canvas, to stiffen it) and the colors are black, dark blue, maroon, green or bright red. In the embossed style of beading, tiny paper cutout patterns were first tacked to the cloth and the beading done over this. As an alternate to this, typical Iroquois designs of abstract nature, done in the tiniest of white seed beads, were the usual decoration. Today, either of these types are used....or tasteful decoration in floral styles are employed. Around the upper rim,

the beaded edging is used, as well as using a bias-tape edging to bind both the top and bottom rims. Again the use of elastic in back is optional, since more often, each woman makes her own band, and to her own head size.

There is a tradition among the Mohawks that young maidens would employ one upright feather in the front of her head-band, and the married women wore such a feather in the back of their head-band.

MOCCASIN (Ah-ta-qu-a-o-weh)



There are few items of footwear for the feminine foot more dainty than the Indian moccasin. Those fortunate enough to own a pair of the genuine Indian-made article are fortunate...to make them last for years have your shoe repair man tap a pair of thin soles on them for you.

For those who must devise a pair of moccasins, but perhaps feel they lack the confidence to make a pair, we have a word of encouragement. There are many leathercraft companies who put out kits for making moccasins, almost exclusively in the typical woodlands style. It is an easy matter to convert a pair to use with your costume. Simply cut pieces of felt or velvet to the shape of the vamp or in-step piece of your moccasins...bead this and tack it to the top of your moccasins with a few stitches. Also, a pair of cuffs can be made in the same manner, likewise beaded, backed with buckskin or canvas, and then sewed around the edge of your moccasin-tops. You'd be surprised at what a clever pair you can turn out this way.

LEGGINGS (gi-se-hah)

The author has been privileged to see many fine pair of leggings...usually those which have been handed down for several generations, since the Iroquois woman lavishes much time on making her leggings. The old pairs have tier upon tier of beadwork, delicate as old lace, and the beads so tiny it would seem impossible that needles fine enough to string these beads

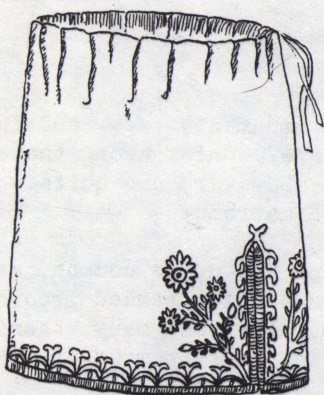
LEGGINGS

(Gi-se-hah) Cont.



VARIOUS STYLES OF
LEGGINGS

SKIRT (Ga-ka-ah)



could ever be found. Invariably, the old leggings are a bright red cloth, usually wool, and with a binding of blue or yellow tape. The beading is always white, as in typical Iroquois abstract beadworking. One has to see it to realize how rich it can really look.

As with the man's leggings, those of the women are split in the front so as to break over the instep. The woman's leggings are short enough so that they come just above the knee, where they are tied. Whether wearing the traditional costume or the modern versions, the women still cling to their old style of leggings.

Some of the present-day leggings are made with dark blue or black cloth, in addition to the traditional red. Wool is the usual material used.

This most important article of the woman's costume was also very richly ornamented. Many, many hours were put in at tastefully decorating it in abstract and/or floral design combinations...with the ultra tiny seed-beads, plus the usual

beads, once so common. Also employed on the skirts was the use of narrow strips of velvet around the bottom hem.

This velvet strip was once edged with beadwork and then the tiny silver brooches of bygone days were fastened to the velvet. Nowadays, sequins are sometimes used for this purpose. And of course, the beading in seed beads, plus the usual beaded edging is always done.

Also it is important to note that the skirt was always made with dark material...blue, black, maroon.

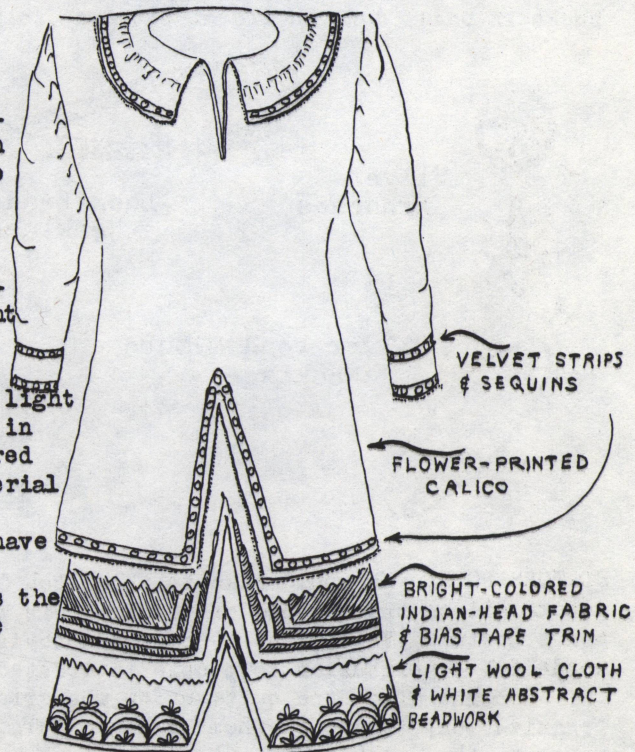
OVERDRESS (Ah-de-ah-dah-weh-sah)

This item, of course, is the most outstanding article of the costume of the Iroquois woman. Materials vary...most older women and dresses seen in museum collections all show a preference for calico cloth, with tiny floral print. (See the item in the Odds & Ends column on where to obtain this old print cloth)

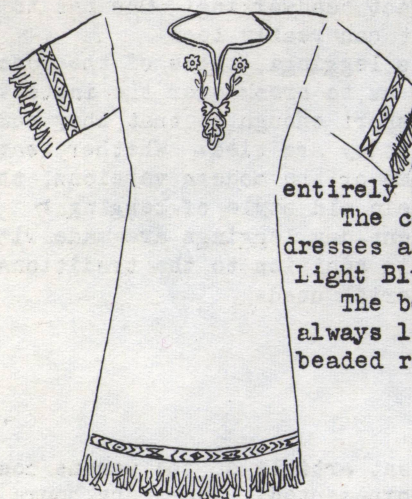
A more recent innovation is the use of the popular Indian-head fabrics, which comes in many bright shades, to make the dress. Bias tape is used in tiers or bands for trim and decoration.

Along more classical lines is the use of fine light wool cloth, with the typical abstract designs done in white beadwork on the dark material, with bright red or yellow bias tape used as a border, if dark material is used for the dress. Most women, though, prefer a bright red or very light blue cloth, a very few have even used light white buckskin for this.

On the calico cloth dress, it was and still is the practice to use velvet strips for trim, on which the tiny pins of silver were once used, but now it is usual to see sequins sewed on.



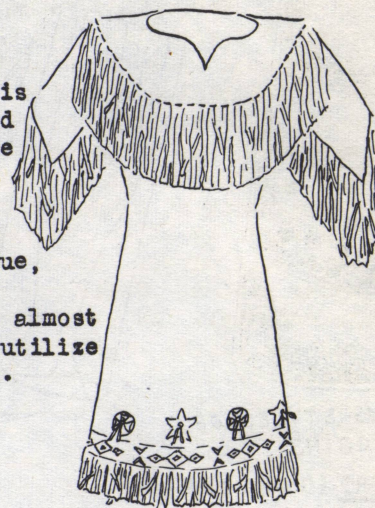
Depicted here, on the left and right, are two of the many variations used by the Iroquois woman today, in making costumes for themselves.



Most often, these types are made cloth, and the fringing is of thin soft buckskin, attached to the dresses. However there are many such dresses made entirely of buckskin.

The colors most often used in these dresses are: White, Bright red, Deep blue, Light Blue, Buckskin tan or yellow.

The beaded strips used for trim are almost always loom beaded. Also, many women utilize beaded rosettes, etc. on their dresses.



ORNAMENTS

One important item we did not depict thus far were the ornaments..... and Indian women are as fond of tasteful, fancy decorations as the warriors are. Chief among these decorations were the old time silver brooches, of varying sizes. These, however, are quite scarce now and rarely seen, except in museums or on the dresses of very old matrons.

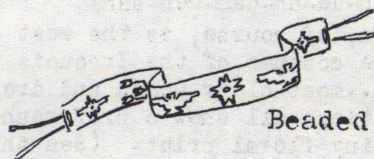
Loom-beaded belts, head-bands, necklaces and dress-strips are quite common, as well as scatterings of floral style beading, plus the typical abstract white beaded Iroquois designs. Naturally Iroquois women like to wear necklaces also, and usually wear many strands of small beads in their necklaces. They are also very fond of carrying small purses or draw-string buckskin bags, done in floral patterns, almost as a part of their costumes.



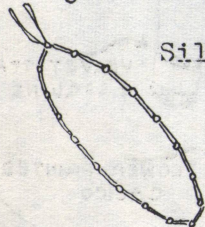
Silver
Brooches



Loom-beaded
Necklace



Beaded Belt



Silver bead & tube
Necklace



Bead necklace



Beaded Rosettes



Beaded Bag

EDITORS NOTE: We would like to thank Bob Gabor of Syracuse, New York once again for the fine job he did on the Costume of the Iroquois Woman. This along with the fine article on Iroquois men's costume (Vol.1, No. 10 of the Hobbyist) plus many other interesting features makes for a wonderful contribution to people interested in Indians.

Bob has also done quite a few wonderful sketches and charts for the Akwesasne Counselor Organization. Write to them in Hogsburg, New York for more information on their charts, or refer to the Hobbyist Vol. 1, No. 7.

FRY BREAD

Many of our readers have expressed an interest in Indian foods for use at pow-wows etc.. Fry bread is an ideal item for anyone to tackle, easy to make, good tasting and typically Indian. The author found it being used by Indians almost all over the country as a staple part of their diet. In the Pueblo area it is replaced by yeast bread and in the far north by Bannock (see the "Beaver" magazine, Autumn 1956 for a good photo discription of this).

The recipe is fairly standard, a simple biscuit dough being used. Most Indian women don't bother with measuring devices and each has a slightly different recipe but the results are practically the same. The author has found the following to give consistantly good results: For enough to make 7 or 8 cakes sift 3 cups of white flour together with 2 full tablespoons of baking powder, one teaspoon(level) of salt and about one tablespoon of sugar. The sugar is often ommited. Stirr well to mix the ingredients and add about one and one half cups cold water. Knead this mixture to a thick doughy consistency and break into about 8 equal pieces. While preparing the dough you should be heating your grease as a good hot oil is esential. We prefer a vegetable oil of the hydrogenated type such as Krisco, Spry etc. but the liquid vegetable oils work as well. The Navaho sometimes make their Fry Bread in animal fats. The bread is to be deep fried so use a deep pan and lots of oil. Test the temperature with a small piece of dough, as you drop it into the hot oil it should immediately rise and float on the surface. It takes only about ten seconds to brown each side and your fry bread is ready to serve. NOTICE: No oils are mixed in the batter.

All sorts of variations are possible and you will no doubt want to experiment some on your own. For example some Indian women use Karo syrup instead of sugar, some use half milk and half water to mix their dough etc. The author has experimented with a little confection using a greater amount of sugar, cinnemon and vanilla flavoring, it taste pretty good too. Some people like to roll their dough very thin, cut it into small pieces and serve with jam or honey.

The Osage in Oklahoma have a specialty known as "Fry Pies". This is made by placing some precooked meat between two layers of the regular fry bread dough, pinching down the edges and frying the whole mess. This way it becomes a whole meal and not just bread. We prepare this as follows: take a half pound ground hamburger meat and spread over frying pan, add one small onion diced fine and fry untill lightly done. Add any seasoning you desire before frying as salt, pepper etc. Pat or roll your dough untill quite thin and spoon the meat mixture onto the dough, fold the dough over the meat and pinch together the edges so that the meat is enclosed, then fry as for bread.

Keep in mind that the grease must be hot for the bread to rise to a light consistancy. Roll the dough thin so that it can cook thru, often a hole is made in the middle donut fashion to help it cook thru. Do not use hot water to prepare your dough or it may rise before you want it to.

Try to make some Fry Bread its really quite easy and we know you'll like it. Good luck.

In the process of working on Indian crafts, aptly labeled "Artifaking" by the Ikpoos of Seattle, we run accross lots of little shortcuts and better ways of doing things, all aimed at making our finished article look just a little more authentic. There are many such things that I have been taking for granted, but I'm sure some of you will be interested.

For example; if you ever have occasion to make a bustle of the Sioux type don't use comercially dyed feathers. Get white ones and dye them yourselves. You will get nice pastel shades which will add years to the appearence of your bustle. Almost any dyes will do. The regular Rit, Tintex type work well or Food Coloring can be used.

If you ever have occasion to use any copper or brass on your costume such as the small brass "Hawk Bells", pipe tomahawks etc. they can be tarnished real easily by dipping in a mixture of equal parts of Vinegar and a Chlorox, Purex type bleach. It works real fast so just dip in and out.

An obvious switch to the method of making "Trade Cloth" presented in the last issue is to start with white cloth and dye all but one edge instead of bleaching.

To make wood look old dip in a solution of dilute black India ink. Don't make it too dilute or it won't have much of an effect. This tends to make the wood look weather worn.

Its amazing how much your beadwork can be improved by the use of old bead colors. Check some old pieces for this. One of the most common is a red bead with a white center. Another is a greasy looking yellow, also a dark clear glass green. Most of these old beads have not been available for quite some time, however many are now available from The Western Trading Post, 187 S.Zuni, Denver 19, Colo.

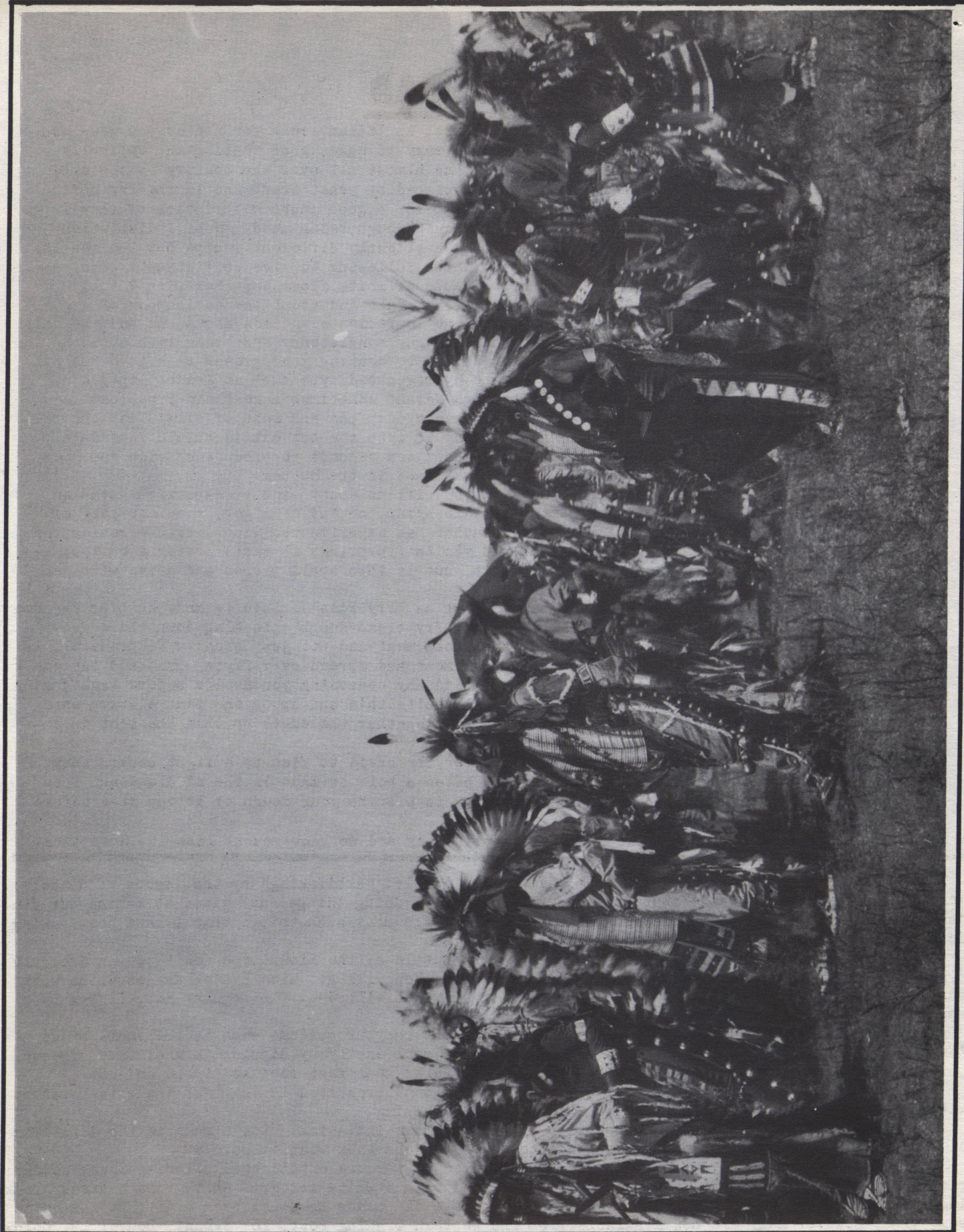


PHOTO OF THE MONTH

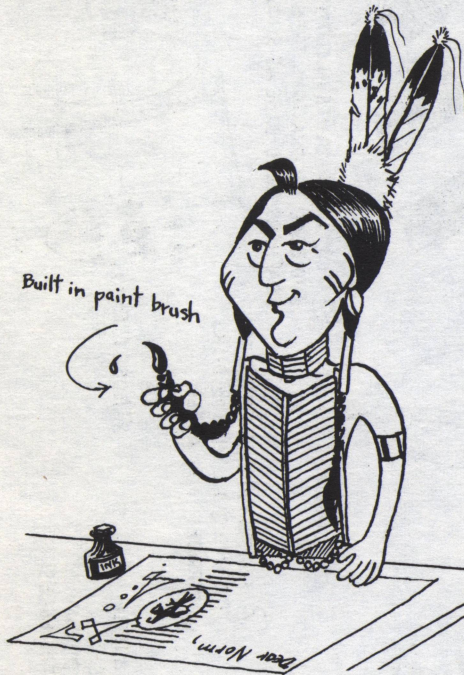
ODDS & ENDS

A NEW BOOK: "A Pictorial History of the American Indian" by Oliver La Farge. Crown publishers \$7.50 a copy. Just off the presses it promises to be rather worthwhile. Has 350 illustrations some in color. Keep your eyes open for it.

INDIAN TRADE GUN SLIDES: The Museum of the Fur Trade; Chadron, Nebraska, has available at \$5 twelve 35mm colored slides, History of the Indian Trade Gun, showing trade guns of different periods from the museum's collections, and a six page commentary. Write to Charles E. Hanson, Jr., director of the museum.

"INDIANS IN CALIFORNIA" : A really fine booklet on the California Indian and his problems. Written by Frank Quinn it may be purchased from the American Friends Service Committee, 1830 Sutter St., San Francisco 15, Calif. Price \$.25.

MORE SLIDES: Not very many people took advantage of our offer for slides to accompany our Ribbon Applique series, but for those who want it we are going to continue to offer slides from time to time. Each offer will only be good for about one month so don't order a year later. We have a fine color slide 35mm of the bustle described in this issue. It is shown as actually worn by an Indian at the Pendelton, Oregon Round-up. Price \$.35. Order # 21.



PEN PAL

Have received only one nibble on our Pen Pal item mentioned in the last issue, but we thought it presented a rather good idea so are repeating it here.

Joel Greenfield, 5045 Parkway J, Sacramento, Calif. would like to find a Tape Pal to correspond by Tape recorder. The idea is to tape a message to him and he will re-record on the same tape and send it back. What a fabulous way to exchange songs. I'll even put my own name down for this. Anyone interested in sending along a tape full of songs can have another sent to them in return. The author and friends recorded better than 12 hours of wonderful singing this past summer. Lets hear from you.

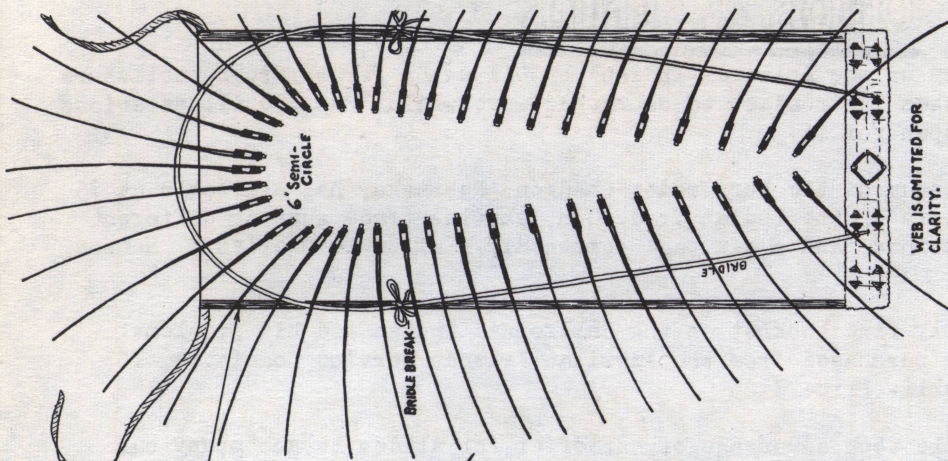
Not everyone has a tape recorder so lets not forget our regular Pen Pals. Send in your name and address and who or what you would like to write about and get it in for the next issue.

The sketch at left is the work of Louie Jull of Seattle. Louie also did the cartoon for the Sept. issue, we sure appreciate it. Thanks.

MONTHLY VERSUS BI-MONTHLY : We would like to put out the magazine every other month or five times a year instead of every month as we are now doing, but we want to have your approval before going ahead. The Oct. Nov. issue was an example of what we would like to do, have each issue twice the usual size and bound with staples. If we do this you will not receive the magazine as often but you will actually be getting more material and in a more convenient form. It will also save us a lot of work as at present we are hand stapling and it would save time on addressing. Please let us know how you feel about this and we will go along with the majority.

HORSE TRADER JOE: Still no items for this. How about it? Joe is about to die for good unless he gets some material.

CALICO CLOTH: The Vermont Crossroads Store, Waterbury, Vermont has some fine old print calico available. Old designs printed from original plates. Send \$.15 for samples. Calico comes in several colors for \$.67 per yard.



TIES →
RIBBON MAY BE USED
AS EDGING

TIES-

RIBBON MAY BE USED
AS EDGING

1 STRIPS OF LEATHER $\frac{1}{4}$ " WIDE ARE FOLDED AND CEMENTED OVER QUILLS TO FORM LOOPS THEN WRAPPED WITH TWO COLORS OF YARN.

④ START WITH LOWER FEATHER ON ONE SIDE AND RUN A BRIDLE THRU BACK OF QUILL ABOUT 4½" FROM END OF LOOP. CONTINUE UNTIL 12 FEATHERS ON ONE SIDE ARE DONE. BRIDLE BREAKS HERE FOR EASY ADJUSTMENT. DO OTHER SIDE THEN THE TOP 19.

WEB IS OMITTED FOR CLARITY.

③ THE CLOTH FOR THE BASE SHOULD REACH FROM THE WAIST TO THE MIDDLE OF THE CALF WITH A FOLD AT TOP TO FORM A BELT PASSAGE OR SEWN DIRECTLY TO A TIE TO PASS AROUND WAIST. CLOTH IS APPROX. 14" WIDE. FEATHERS SHOULD BE SPACED OUT ON CLOTH ACCORDING TO SIZE, LARGEST AT TOP, TAPERING TO SMALLEST AT THE BOTTOMS. FEATHERS AT THE TOP ARE PLACED AROUND A 6" SEMI-CIRCLE.

MARK CLOTH ON BOTH SIDES OF LEATHER
LOOPS FOR LACING SLOTS.

5 CUT LACING SLOTS IN CLOTH BASE
ADD BEAD DECORATIONS THEN LACE
FEATHERS ONTO BASE AS SHOWN.

② FLUFFIES ARE CEMENTED TO TIP AND QUILL WITH 1/2" DISKS OF RABBIT FUR ADDED.

43 EAGLE WING FEATHERS WERE USED IN THIS BUSTLE
1AT TOP CENTER AND 21 LEFTS AND 21 RIGHTS.
THE TRIANGLES ARE BEADED SEPARATELY AND SEWN
TO CLOTH, SEQUINS ARE USED FOR EDGING OF TRIANGLES.

**ATHONG THRU ROSETTE, CLOTH
AND A LARGE DISK OF RAWHIDE OR
METAL HOLDS BUSTLE TOGETHER.**

Drawn By C. T. L.

BONNET BUSTLE



Attention Indian Bugs!

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BUSTLE KITS • BEADS • BELLS • BOOKS • LEATHER • FURS
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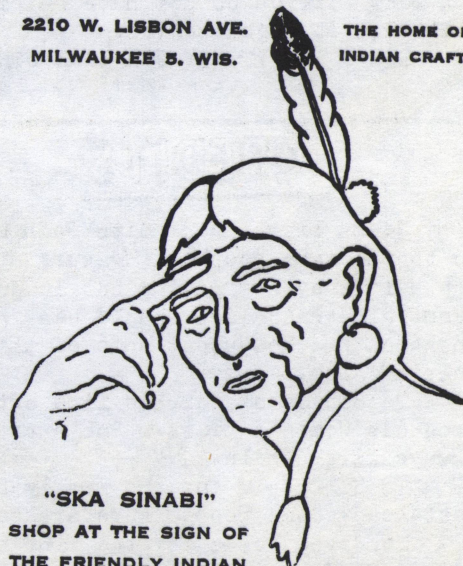
SHOWN ABOVE IS AN AD WE PLACED IN
THE "HOBBYIST" LAST MARCH. THESE WIGS
WERE A GOOD BUY AT \$35.50. HOWEVER NOW
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MILWAUKEE 5, WIS.

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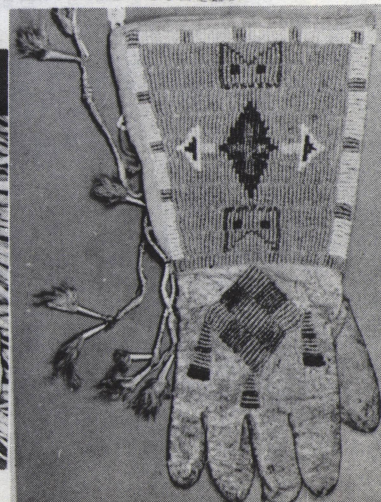
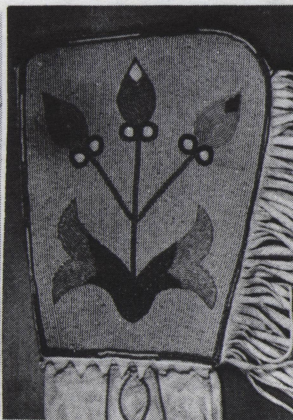
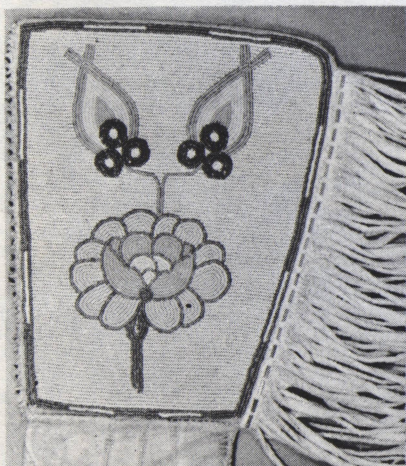


"SKA SINABI"

SHOP AT THE SIGN OF
THE FRIENDLY INDIAN

Send 10¢ for Catalog

Below as a space filler are some gauntlets from the Southwest Museum collections.



CONTEST

Don't know what we have to do to rouse some of you people to action. I know if I could enter a contest where the prize was a Plains catlinite pipe with quilled stem or a pair of Ribbon applique strips I would certainly submit at least one entry. I know many of you have several good ideas and some even have lots of talent so send something in. Frankly we are not stuck for material, there is plenty of this available, what we need is something in finished form as your editor just doesn't have the time to prepare all the material for the magazine each month. It took the entire summer to prepare the ribbon issue and I can't spend this much time on everything. If everyone would help by submitting only one article and taking some pains to do a good job, just think of what a great magazine we could have.

Well, we are going to move up our deadline date to March 1st, 1957. This will give you just two months to prepare an article and if we only get one entry, usable or not this will get first prize.

Our rules are simple; Submit any usable article on any phase of Indian Lore. This means any material we can use in the magazine, craft how-to-do-its, authentic dances, features on events or people, dance groups etc., If possible submit your ideas on 8 X 10 white paper and preferably in finished form. Sketches in India ink and photos will help. Contest open to subscribers only, We reserve the right to use all material submitted. First prize is the pipe mentioned above, second the ribbon strips and all other material used will receive a one year subscription to this magazine.

We also want photos of Indian interest. Photos of Indians, white Indians, craft items, etc. Everyone has several of these about, why not send them in. We will give a years subscription for each photo used. We can only use these in 4" X 5" or larger and preferably in 8 X 10". If you do not have a print this size, send in a smaller print and the negative we will blow it up ourselves.

DON'T PUT IT OFF FOR SOME OTHER TIME. ENTER NOW.

CREDITS

Seems like the credits each month always go to the same people. We sure appreciate the help they are giving but it just doesn't seem fair that a few should bear all the burden each month. How about some of the rest of you helping also.

To Bob Gabor for his fine article on Iroquois Women's Dress. Bob's articles are always worth while.

To Bill Holm for the really beautiful mast-head. Some people sure are talented.

To Clyde Felts for the fine bustle drawings. Clyde is no stranger to the pages of the Hobbyist and we can expect more from him in the future.

To Clarence Ellsworth for another old photo, and to Louie Jull for the Pen Pal sketch.

Let's see your name in the credit column next month. How about it?

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P. O. Box 35152
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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

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Norman Feder - Editor & Publisher